



Paul Hosefros/The New York Times

Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene of Lithuania was honored by House members at a breakfast.

Lithuania Premier Sees Bush, But There's No Red Carpet

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WASHINGTON, May 3 — Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene of Lithuania was not expecting the White House driveway to be lined with her nation's gold, green and red flags. She was not expecting an honor guard or an Oval Office lunch or a joint departure statement with President Bush on the South Lawn.

She knew there would be no diplomatic fillips because the Bush Administration does not recognize Lithuania's declaration of independence, and because the White House did not want to trumpet the visit for fear of offending the Soviet President, Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

But the Prime Minister never expected to have her Lincoln sedan stopped at the White House gate. She did not expect to have to get out of the car, show her red Soviet passport to a security guard, go through a metal detector and walk up the long driveway to the White House on her own.

White House officials put the best

face on the embarrassing do-it-yourself reception, asserting that the driveway gate was broken. But they had no excuse about why there was no one there to greet the Prime Minister until after the party had spent 10 minutes trying to get inside, for what turned out to be a 45-minute meeting with the President.

Mrs. Prunskiene is nothing if not unflappable. If President Vytautas Landsbergis took the hot emotional route in recent remarks, saying that President Bush had sold away Lithuania just as the Allies appeased Hitler in 1938 by allowing Nazi Germany to claim the German-speaking part of Czechoslovakia, Prime Minister Prunskiene took the cool, reasonable approach today as she pleaded her nation's cause with members of Congress, the President and the press.

"Even the world's darling does not have the monopolistic right to decide

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the fate of other nations," she said on Capitol Hill, in a scathing reference to Mr. Gorbachev.

Talking through a translator, she calmly warned that too much sympathy for Mr. Gorbachev soon "degenerates into toadyism, and the latter gives birth to a cult."

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Bush, the first direct contact between the White House and a representative of the Vilnius government, was hastily arranged by the White House just two days ago, after Bush officials realized she had a highly visible schedule on Capitol Hill.

She told Mr. Bush that her country would never revoke its declaration of independence, but that it was willing to suspend new laws passed by the Lithuanian Parliament to put into effect the declaration of independence if she received international guarantees. The guarantees would consist of international recognition of the government, of Lithuania's sovereignty and of its boundaries.

President Bush reminded Mrs. Prunskiene of Hungary in 1956, when the Western powers encouraged a rebellion against Soviet domination and then watched helplessly as Soviet Army

tanks rolled into Budapest.

"The message was, 'You can't face down the Soviet Union if they don't want to be faced down,'" said a senior Administration official. "He told her that the U.S. wants dialogue — talk, talk, talk."

The official also said the President told the Prime Minister that a compromise proposal on suspending Lithuania's independence laws, recently suggested by President François Mitterrand of France and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany, "had merit." The Bush Administration, the official said, had "privately and earlier suggested something similar."

'Very Impressive Lady'

President Bush found Mrs. Prunskiene "a very impressive lady, very articulate, very balanced," said the official. For her part, the Lithuanian leader was cautiously happy with the meeting. Unlike some members of Congress, who said the summit meeting scheduled for later this month should be postponed, she said she wanted it to go forward, and hoped both leaders would listen "not only to the voice of the strong but also to the voice of those who are not quite strong."

She said she told President Bush that she hoped that at the summit meeting, the United States could find a way to take a formal role as a mediator in the dispute between the Soviet Union and

Ex-Party Aide to

RIGA, Latvia, May 3 (Reuters) — A former Latvian Communist Party official who once denounced pro-independence demonstrators was re-elected by Parliament today to lead the Baltic republic out of the Soviet Union.

Anatoly Gorbunov, who had been President since October 1988, was reconfirmed by the republic's newly elected nationalist-dominated Parliament. On Friday, it is expected to take the first steps toward secession by reinstating parts of the republic's constitution of 1922, when it was independent. Latvia and the other Baltic republics, Lithuania and Estonia, were annexed by the Soviet Government in 1940.

In a speech shortly before his re-election, Mr. Gorbunov warned deputies that the path to inde-

Lithuania.

As though he were afraid of letting the self-possessed Lithuanian Prime Minister have the Washington stage to herself, only weeks before the summit

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Lead New Latvia

pendence would not be easy and that Latvia and the other Baltic republics would have to go it alone and could not count on outside support.

"We must show the world that we are not endangering East-West dialogue," said Mr. Gorbunov, who once denounced those taking part in a nationalist demonstration as "traitors" but is now backed by the pro-independence Popular Front.

"The world is not going to risk what has been done in the area of arms control," he said, "because of five million Balts."

Vytautas Landsbergis, President of neighboring Lithuania, which has been locked in a battle with the Kremlin since declaring its independence March 11, told Latvian deputies that the "world was watching Latvia."

is to begin here on May 30, the President held one of his impromptu news conferences this morning and offered his most lavish praise yet of Mr. Gorbachev.

"I salute the man for what he has done," Mr. Bush said. "I think he's under extraordinary pressure at home, particularly on the economy. I do, from time to time, worry about a takeover that will set back the whole process."

But Mrs. Prunskiene argued that Mr. Gorbachev would become stronger if Lithuania were democratic because it would aid him on overcoming "the reactionary forces" who oppose Baltic independence and his program of change.

The President said reports that the Soviet military was pressing Mr. Gorbachev to take a harder line on some arms-control issues were "a matter of some concern."

He also cast doubt on the Prime Minister's notion that the United States could mediate the Lithuania dispute. "If there was a constructive role for the United States, of course, we should fulfill that, but there's not," he said.

In an interview in her car, as she drove from the Hill to an appointment with Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger, the Prime Minister warned President Bush and the American people against pursuing a policy that is too dependent on Mr. Gorbachev's future.

"Freedom, like a genie that's been let out of the bottle, doesn't necessarily want to listen to the dictates of the person who uncorked the bottle," she said,

explaining Lithuania's defiance of Mr. Gorbachev.

She spoke only in passing, and without emotion, of her country's "difficult times, deprived of oil, most of her gas, metal and other important products." She recast the case for her country in logical terms, saying that the United States did not need to choose between helping Lithuania and helping Mr. Gorbachev.

"The solution is this: Gorbachev together with a breakthrough for democracy in the Soviet Union and an independent Lithuania," she told the members of Congress on the Helsinki Commission.

At a dinner tonight, with journalists at the house of Christopher Mathews, a columnist for The San Francisco Examiner, Mrs. Prunskiene was asked why Lithuania had not waited a year to declare its independence.

She smiled and said, "We felt we had to do it quickly, like a karate chop, if it was to work."

Mrs. Prunskiene, a 47-year-old economist and former Communist Party official, had a small entourage, no security guards and she rode in a dark-blue sedan paid for by a private person in the Lithuanian-American community. As a translator, she used the head of a Lithuanian-American organization based in Washington.